



# HIV/AIDS and Public Health

United States Embassy in South Africa

AMERICA INVESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA



*South Africa is one of 15 countries specifically targeted for assistance under the **President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief**.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The United States Government and private sector play a key role in helping the people of South Africa improve their health. In partnership with the South African Government, U.S. government agencies, universities and foundations support the improvement of health services, the expansion of health research and disease surveillance, and the prevention, control and treatment of chronic and infectious diseases.

An estimated 5.6 million South Africans are infected with HIV, more individuals than in any other country. One out of five South Africans 15-49 years of age are HIV positive. Almost half of HIV-infected individuals die of tuberculosis. As parents have died, 1.1 million children have been orphaned. In many parts of South Africa, the HIV/AIDS crisis is contributing to social and economic disruption.

The South African Government has developed a comprehensive strategy and guidelines focused on HIV treatment, prevention and care. The U.S. supports these plans and is rapidly expanding efforts to help address HIV/AIDS and other health conditions.

## **WHAT IS THE U.S. MISSION DOING?**

Through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the United States provided over \$78 million in 2004 to support HIV/AIDS activities:

- **Treatment:** The U.S. supports the provision of antiretroviral therapy for thousands of South Africans by working closely with the National Department of Health and other government agencies, local and international NGO's, faith-based organizations, research institutions, the private sector, and others. U.S. programs also provide training and laboratory and diagnostic support to assist HIV/AIDS treatment.
- **Prevention:** The U.S. supports a broad array of prevention programs, from mass media efforts to targeted programs for high-risk populations. With a special emphasis on young people, the U.S. and its partners support programs of proven effectiveness in Africa that include promotion of abstinence, the delay of sexual activity, and faithfulness.
- **Care:** U.S. support is rapidly growing for partners who provide palliative care to HIV-infected people, including the management of tuberculosis and other opportunistic diseases. Large programs provide home, community and facility based care for AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children and households affected by AIDS.

The U.S. also works with national and provincial departments of health, universities, and NGO's to strengthen primary health care, disease monitoring, and research through:

- Strengthening diagnosis and treatment capacity of tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted infections (STI).
- Strengthening the quality of basic health services.
- Developing sustainable health support systems including laboratory, information systems, management, logistics and epidemiological observation capacity.
- Helping control diarrheal disease.
- Enhancing child survival and maternal health programs.

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### WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- As of February 2005, almost 10,000 South Africans have begun antiretroviral (ARV) treatment with direct U.S. Government support.
- The U.S. Government has funded the training of 25,000 health professionals to assist the South African Government implement its plan to combat HIV and AIDS.
- A system for tracking inventory and distribution of drugs is being expanded nationwide.
- South African scientists engage in essential research on HIV, child nutrition, and basic biomedical and behavioral questions.
- Centers for HIV research excellence have been established in Durban, Johannesburg and within the South African Military Health Service.
- Peace Corps Volunteers have trained educators and communities to reduce risk behavior related to STI and HIV/AIDS, especially among youth.
- Traditional healers are developing counseling and testing programs and culturally appropriate prevention messages.
- An electronic TB register is operating in four provinces. A 24-hour AIDS help line is functioning.
- USAID's Southern Africa Regional HIV/AIDS Program and the regional program of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Pretoria invest in strategic HIV/AIDS activities in Swaziland and Lesotho which have among the highest prevalence rates in the world.



*Providing AIDS treatment and care on a platform of clinical research excellence*

### U.S. FOUNDATIONS FUND HEALTH PROGRAMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Kaiser Foundation
- Elisabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Secure the Future Foundation
- Doris Duke Foundation

Figure 2: Distribution of Emergency Plan activities



### WHAT'S NEXT?

- Support the South African effort to rollout ARV therapy nationwide.
- Provide for support and care for thousands of orphans and vulnerable children.
- Support the nationwide development of palliative care programs.
- Improve programs that address nutritional aspects of HIV and AIDS management.
- Help South African health officials implement their strategic TB plans, and provide technical support to strengthen health sector support systems.
- Expand efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. Assist development of effective pediatric AIDS care.
- Encourage union/business involvement in workplace HIV/AIDS policies and effective prevention, treatment and care programs.
- Train national and provincial HIV/AIDS managers in program management, planning, budgeting and supervision.
- Strengthen primary health care services and systems.

#### USEFUL WEBSITES



**Department of State-Global AIDS Coordinator**  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/hiv/>

**U.S. Agency for International Development**  
<http://www.usaid.gov/>

**Department of Health and Human Services**  
<http://www.os.dhhs.gov/>

**National Institutes of Health**  
<http://www.nih.gov/>

**Centers for Disease Control**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/>

Fact Sheets are released by the Public Affairs Office of the United States Embassy in South Africa.

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